
Powell Ranger District

Bridge Fire FACT SHEET

UPDATE: September 3, 2007

DATE OF DETECTION: July 25, 2007

CAUSE: Lightning

CONTAINMENT: 0%

LOCATION: This **41,750-acre** fire is located within the Clearwater National Forest two miles north of the Elk Summit Guard Station and approximately 9 miles southeast of the Powell, Idaho.

BRIDGE FIRE STATUS: There was no change in size on the Bridge Fire Sunday. Fire managers observed “creeping” (fire burning with a low flame and spreading slowly) and smoldering with isolated “torching” (burning of a tree’s foliage from the bottom up) and short-range “spotting” (sparks or embers start new fires beyond the main fire) near the Montana border. The northeastern edge of the Bridge Fire is within about ¼ mile of the Idaho-Montana border. Helicopters will again be used to drop water on hot spots in the vicinity of Garnet Lake. The goal is to confine the fire to the Idaho side of the Bitterroot Range.

The fire is burning in Big Flat Creek in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness and has reached the rugged ridgetop that forms the Idaho-Montana border. Terrain on the border is very rocky and fuel is not continuous. To the west, the fire continues to move slowly toward Kooskooskia Meadows. The fire spotted across Rabbit Creek on the northwestern flank earlier this week. That spot has grown to a size of about 100 acres. The northeastern edge of the fire has reached the upper reaches of the Colt Killed drainage. The fire’s southern edge is holding at Big Sand Creek.

RESOURCES: A Type III Incident Commander, Barry Ruklic, is assigned to manage the fire with the Powell Ranger District. The Powell District initial attack crew is assisting with the fire. Fire personnel and lookouts are monitoring fire activity from safe locations. Fire activity is currently consistent with the long-term management plan for the fire.

AREA CLOSURES: There is an area closure around the Bridge Fire. It extends north to the Beaver Ridge Road 369 and includes the Elk Summit Road 360. Area closure maps are posted at campgrounds and trailheads on the Powell Ranger District. The public is asked to please refrain from entering this area. For further information about campgrounds or the area closure, contact the Powell Ranger Station at 208-942-3113.

FIRE RESTRICTIONS: Stage 1 fire restrictions are currently in effect for all Clearwater National Forest lands. Restrictions for the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness are slightly different than non-wilderness lands. Contact the Powell Ranger Station for details.

BACKGROUND: The Bridge Fire was started by a lightning strike July 25. Firefighters initially responded to the fire by stopping its spread west toward Elk Summit Road 360 until all people were evacuated from trails and campsites along the road. Structure protection was initiated for the Elk Summit Guard Station and outbuilding, as well as five wooden bridges in the area. When structure protection was completed, active firefighting efforts were reduced due to (1) an inability to access the fire’s remote location in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, (2) the low probability of containment, and (3) the danger of putting firefighters at risk because of extreme fire behavior. The fire is now being monitored and evaluated daily by fire lookouts and fire personnel on the Powell Ranger District. Scarce firefighting resources are being mobilized to other high priority fires that are threatening life and property. The public will be affected by smoke from the fire as well as area closures around the fire, limiting access to desired recreation areas. The fire will likely burn until there is a significant, season-ending weather event. If you have questions regarding the management of this fire, please contact Powell District Ranger, Chad Benson.

INFORMATION: For more information, log onto www.incweb.org, the Clearwater National Forest website www.fs.fed.us/r1/clearwater or call the Powell Ranger Station at 208-942-3113.